3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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the Paramount and all the Ngoni leaders. Part of their excitement was expressed by the youths in whistling, an accomplishment much esteemed by the Ngoni. Herd-boys learned to whistle in one fashion in imitation of birds to lure them to the traps. They whistled in another way to make the cattle move faster to and from the grazing grounds, and in a more provocative way to stir up the bulls to fight. They whistled signals to each other over long distances across the valleys, and they practised whistling at all kinds of times 'to make the tongue more nimble'. By the time they were young men they were skilled whistlers, ready to perform as an accompaniment to the individual dancers celebrating a lion kill, or to the team of youths and girls in the *ngoma* dance.

Other skills

After the wealth to be earned from cattle, the excitement of the chase and the fame acquired by lion-hunts, most other pursuits seemed tame to young Ngoni men, especially those related to cultivation. They got some fun however out of the occasional communal hoeing-parties for clearing new land, or terracing land already cleared. A gang of young men would challenge another to do an appointed task in a given time. The two parties would fall to, hoeing in a line, shouting encouragement to each other and insults to their rivals such as: 'You! You are just women. See how you hoe with your arms bent'—with bursts of whistling and singing to keep up the tempo of work.

The same gang spirit, calling for swift co-ordination and good humour, showed in the role played by young men when a hut was being built. Their part was to dig a wide shallow pit, break up the clods of earth, and pour in water carried to them by the women. Then they trampled the mud until it was mixed ready for the women to plaster on the walls. As they trampled they sang and whistled and stamped with the high knee-bending movement of the *ngoma* dance, emerging finally red-brown from toe to thigh, laughing at

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

224 A falling spear trap for an elephant is called "*mchera*." It is set in the path where elephants pass. They take the weighted spear, and tie it up above, the string for setting it off is on the ground. An elephant, when it passes, will set off the string, and the spear comes down and falls on the spine of the elephant. Men hunt also with a game net; they stretch the net, and take staves and drive them in at the ends and the middle [to keep the net up]. People remain behind and hunt out the game, and when a buck starts up, it goes into the net. Birds 223 are hunted with a little net made tied to two bamboos, which are held in the hands, and (the person hunting) stands still. Others go and drive the birds, and if they go into the net, the man who is holding it swirls it round and kills the birds by squeezing them to his breast, lest they cry out, and meanwhile gives a whistle, and the beaters stand. The kinds of birds caught by a net are *Mpeta*, *Atii* [136] *Madzanjo*, *Mapwiti*, *Kuzikuzi*. *Nkwali* (partridge), *Nkanga* (guinea-fowl), *Mang'ani* (quail), *Njiwa* (pigeon) are hunted with knobkerries; when they fly up, they throw. Birds are also hunted with blunt-headed arrows, and others caught in traps. In the dry season, when there is only a very little water left, all the thirsty birds go to drink water, and always go to the same place. When a person sees they frequent this place, he begins to set about trapping them with birdlime. He rubs it on a stick, and sticks the stick in the water, and when the birds come to drink water, they get stuck by their feet (legs), and also feathers. Mice are also hunted. 224 The *Mende*, and the *Nchenzi* (rat), and the *Sakwi*, are all hunted with "*goba*" traps, which are set on the run. Some go and hunt them out, one stays behind; when a mouse would run away, it goes into the goba trap, and the man squeezes it to death, and